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Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities

Statement submitted by Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2005/100.

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Statement

My organization is submitting this statement on behalf of a coalition of NGOs working in the field of Social Development and who are members of the C.O.N.G.O. Committee for Social Development, of which I serve as the current Chair. The NGO Committee for Social Development represents approximately forty-five humanitarian organizations many of whose members work with people and communities in extreme poverty in virtually every country, South and North. The Committee is grateful to have this opportunity to offer these brief comments which we trust will be helpful to sovereign states in their decision-making relative to ending extreme poverty within their countries. The Millennium Development Goals and the Millennium Declaration are critical because they represent the clearest indication to date of a global consensus on the need to end extreme poverty. At this juncture, it is vital to re-energize that consensus and to that end the NGO community will continue to work energetically with governments and other entities, on country and regional levels, in the implementation and monitoring of the MDG's. The NGO community must continue to play a vital role in the current review process and in the ongoing planning for the full implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

The NGO Committee for Social Development sees the positive experience of the recent 43rd Commission on Social Development as an example of governments and NGOs working together towards a greater goal and, therefore, achieving more than either entity could working separately. From the very beginning of the process, the leadership of the Commission met with the NGO Community and provided relevant information. Government members actively sought the expertise and experience of NGOs and encouraged the NGO community to exercise its consultative role fully. Likewise, NGOs honored the decision–making role that rightly belongs to member governments.

As many governments already know, virtually all established grass-roots NGO's have a long history of accompanying communities of people living in extreme poverty in the very elemental tasks of surviving as families, making whatever progress is possible for their own sake and for the sake of their children.

NGO's have the experience of mentoring large and small development projects in urban and rural communities; through experience they have come to know what works and what doesn't; and they know that irreplaceable fellow human beings live and die while we wait for more comprehensive poverty eradication strategies to be acted on.

The Declaration of the NGO Forum, 8 February 2005, aimed at keeping the spirit of Copenhagen alive. The NGO community committed itself to do so by:

- Working for open partnerships between civil society and governments
- Working to place people and human rights at the centre of development
- Promoting equitable investment in social and economic development, and,
- Ensuring inclusion and participation of all those affected by government policy.

These remain our commitments; on the basis of these commitments we remain open to a variety of partnerships.

We stated to members of the Commission in February that for us NGOs working in the field of social development, the MDGs and the year 2015 had marked but a midpoint. We were asking that in 2005, governments commit themselves to a Global Social Contract grounding security for all in a commitment to social development for all, pointing beyond the Millennium Development Goals to the full realization of the promises that Copenhagen had given to the impoverished peoples of the world.